**UUNI 288 and 289: Applied Learning Internship Program Orientation Handbook**

**Introduction**

Congratulations, you’ve secured an internship!

You are about to spend a semester working, learning, networking, developing new skills and enhancing your resume through your internship experience and the internship course. Now what? This Internship Orientation Handbook will help you make the most of your internship!

**Internship Policies**

**Course information**

- You may register for either UUNI 288 (1-credit) or UUNI 289 (3-credits). The number of internship hours vary by course, but the academic assignments are the same.
- You may not register for UUNI 288 and 289 simultaneously.
- Prerequisites include a minimum 2.0 GPA and sophomore standing. Courses are graded S/U.
- You must complete the internship and the course simultaneously. No retroactive credit will be assigned for internships completed prior to the semester in which you are registered for the internship course.
- You are required to complete a minimum of 50 hours at your internship site for UUNI-288 (1 credit) or 150 hours for UUNI-289 (3-credits).
- Your hours must be completed over the duration of the entire semester. Therefore, you cannot complete 50 hours in a week and still earn course credit. The hours requirement is a minimum requirement, but you may complete more than are required for the course.

**Assignments**

- Course instruction is 100% online via Blackboard, allowing students to complete the work from anywhere in the world.
- A syllabus will be provided by the instructor at the beginning of the semester.
- You will be expected to complete readings, watch videos, participate in online discussions with your classmates, and submit other academic assignments throughout the semester in which you are registered and completing the internship.

**Supervisor role**

- Your internship is a three-way partnership between you, the university, and your internship site. In order for you to get the most from your experience and fulfill course requirements, we need to be able to communicate with your internship supervisor, who serves as your mentor throughout the internship. Please make sure that your supervisor understands that we ask them to sign a Learning Agreement/Action Plan, speak to someone from the university at mid-semester to monitor your progress, sign your timesheet, and complete a final evaluation.
Scheduling

- If you have permissible work absences, including illness or other serious circumstances, be sure to notify your employer and the internship course instructor immediately. Difficulty keeping pace with your coursework or co-curricular activities are not legitimate reasons to excuse yourself from internship responsibilities. The University offers numerous support services to help you if you need it, including advising and counseling services.
- Your internship schedule should mirror the schedule of your internship site. You do not automatically have a day off when the University is closed or classes are not in session (for example, spring break). Coordinate accordingly with your internship site supervisor.
- Any changes to your internship status must be reported immediately to the UUNI 288 or 289 instructor.
- Inform your course instructor immediately if terminated from your internship site. You will be required to find a new internship to fulfill course requirements or receive a “U” grade for the course.

Special note for international students: All international students interested in doing an internship should meet with the International Student and Scholar Services Home (ISSS) to receive Curricular Practical Training authorization before beginning an internship. More information is available at http://www.albany.edu/isss/current_students.php.

Making the Most of Your Internship

The first course assignment will be the Learning Agreement/Action Plan. The course instructor will provide the form and more information during Week 1 of the course. This assignment is required to receive a passing grade in UUNI 288 and 289.

Start thinking now about what you want to get out of your internship experience

Remember that this is YOUR internship experience, so it is your responsibility to develop and achieve your own individual learning objectives. First, carefully read the internship position description. If there is none or if you have questions, ask for clarification. You will want to develop objectives that fit the parameters of the internship job description and help you achieve your learning goals. This helps you frame your experience in a meaningful way and ensures that you will be completing tasks beyond just “getting coffee” for your supervisor.

Keep a copy of your Learning Agreement/Action Plan. Once you have spent some time at your internship you can refine or redirect some of your learning objectives. You should meet regularly with your supervisor to revisit the learning agreement, ask for assistance, and make sure you are meeting your learning goals. You may also want to add new objectives as you move through your internship experience.

You will receive more information about developing learning objectives as part of course, but start thinking now about what you want to learn during your internship. Begin by brainstorming a list of your personal/professional strengths and areas for improvement.
Consider the following:

- **CAREER DEVELOPMENT:** What career would I like to learn more about during this internship? *(e.g. it will help advance my knowledge of qualifications in the field of journalism)*
- **ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:** How will this internship tie to my major and/or my academic goals?
- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:** What skills would I like to acquire during this internship? This includes both hard *(PowerPoint, project management software tools, statistical software, lab experience, etc.)* and soft skills *(leadership, team-building, time management, confidence, problem-solving, group presentation skills, etc.)*.

**Making a good first impression**

Remember that you aren’t just an intern, you are also representing University at Albany. The better you represent yourself and respect others, the more successful your experience will be. You may be surprised to find that your internship opens up many doors for you later down the line in terms of academic and career success and networking opportunities. Here are some tips to get it right from the beginning:

- **Arrive on time.** It is critical that you arrive at work when scheduled, either on time or early. People always notice when you’re late, even if you don’t think they’re paying attention.
- **Make a good first impression by dressing appropriately.** More on this in the next section.
- **Make eye contact and offer a firm handshake when you meet your colleagues.** Practice giving a snappy 30-60 second sound bite of who you are, why you chose this internship, or a quick description of the first project you’ll likely be working on.
- **Research the organization and the key people within the organization.** Try to understand how you fit into the structure of the organization.
- **Be flexible.** An intern who is able to adjust quickly to their new work environment will excel. Have an open mind when it comes to working on different projects or different scopes of work to show your new employers that you can deal well with change and uncertainty, a key indicator of success in a workplace.
- **Take initiative.** Ask if you can give a short presentation toward the end of the internship about the new skills you have learned or projects you have worked on. This will demonstrate your initiative and enthusiasm for the role and give you an ideal opportunity to practice your presentation skills.
Professional attire

One of the biggest complaints from employers about interns is about inappropriate attire. Casual clothing that is fine to wear when you are with friends or on campus do not often fit into an office environment. Dressing to fit in with the company culture shows that you are professional and take your internship seriously.

- **Look the part.** Pay attention to what others are wearing and dress accordingly. If you are unsure at first, it is always better to dress more formally and then adjust more casually once you understand the culture of the organization. When in doubt, ask.
- **Nothing too provocative or see-through.** Avoid clothing that is too tight, too revealing or too provocative.
- **Don’t be offensive.** Do not wear items of clothing with offensive language or symbols. Do not wear ripped or stained clothing.
- **Shoes matter.** Avoid flip flops or sneakers, over-the-knee boots, sexy stilettos, or unkempt or dirty shoes. If everyone is wearing sandals in the summer, you probably can too, but look for what the majority of employees are wearing as a cue for you.
- **Simple grooming is best.** Hair should be washed and styled, make-up should be light and not overly dramatic, fingernails should be cleaned, and perfume and cologne should be used sparingly. Use your own judgement about body piercings and tattoos. You may want to remove piercings or cover tattoos until you’ve had the opportunity for management to get to know you for your personality and work ethic.
- **Buy a good dress coat and raincoat.** If you’ve invested in a few key pieces of business clothing, be sure to protect them with a good dress coat or raincoat.

Becoming familiar with the industry

Be familiar with resources, software, and management systems that are relevant in your organization or industry. Helpful Hints:

- Ask your supervisor questions about the organization to gain an overall perspective
- Seek opportunities to develop business skills, e.g. marketing, project planning.
- Familiarize yourself with software and management systems used in the organization.
- Ask your supervisor and colleagues how they were successful in their career and what advice they may have for someone who is new to the field.
- Ask colleagues about working efficiently and any advice they have.
Conquering basic computer skills

Almost every internship required knowledge of basic skills in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint). Every job today is more data-driven and information-rich and the ability to manage, organize, synthesize, and present information in a compelling way is very important.

- **Submit professional-looking documents.** While typing up a Word document is relatively easy, making it look nice is harder than it looks. For more advanced designing, download free templates from Microsoft or find online tutorials for Microsoft Word. This way, your work will be informative and look professional.
- **Use PowerPoint to your advantage.** For presentations, select a simple yet visually pleasing theme on PowerPoint or Prezi to keep your slideshow cohesive and interesting.
- **Become an Excel guru.** When organizing large amounts of information or data, Excel can either be a tedious nightmare or an efficient time-saver. The program comes with countless shortcuts that most beginners aren’t aware of. Check out an online tutorial to learn more about Excel shortcuts to make your life easier.

Developing “soft skills”

As an intern, you'll need to practice how to communicate appropriately and effectively with supervisors, colleagues, and clients. Don’t be afraid to share your opinions in a respectful manner and ask questions. Here are some helpful hints:

- **Know your audience.** Different people respond to different styles of communication.
- **Be considerate of others.** When initiating a conversation, always ask the person if they have a moment to talk. If they are busy, ask if there is a more convenient time to set up a meeting.
- **Practice your presentation skills.** Seek opportunities to speak publicly or make formal presentations whenever possible. If you are required to make a formal presentation, practice several times beforehand. Set a timer to ensure that your presentation fills the allotted time.
- **Know your colleagues.** Learn the names and roles of the people you are working with.
- **Ask for help.** It is ok not to have all the answers. Always ask for help if you are unsure about something. Take the time to find the right person or resource that can assist you with your project.

Professional writing and email etiquette

- **All writing should be a considered a formal document.** That includes emails, letters, and reports.
- **Be sure to allow time to proofread.** Check for proper spelling, grammar, and format in all documents.
- **Only discuss public matters.** We've all heard the stories about a "private" e-mail that ended up being forwarded to the entire company, and in some cases, all over the Internet. If it’s a private matter, have
a discussion behind closed doors rather than via email. Don’t write anything you wouldn’t want to see posted throughout the organization.

- **Practice concise writing skills.** Concise writing is important, even when writing memos or emails.
- **Include a clear subject line in your email.** Include a clear, direct subject line such as “Draft Proposal” or “Meeting date changed.” Also, you can change the subject as soon as the content of the e-mail chain changes, so that the subject line matches the message.
- **Use a professional email address.** You should always have an email address that conveys your name. Never use immature email addresses that you may have used in high school such as ‘beerlover@’, ‘ninjaskills787@’, etc. Use a gmail account or one of the many free email providers out there. Any combination of your first name and last name is generally a good one.
- **Use professional salutations.** Start an email with a salutation like “Dear John”, instead of simply beginning with the body of a message. Email is more formal than a text message and should be structured more like an actually letter. Other acceptable salutations include “hi” or “hello”, but never “yo”, “you guys”, or “y’all”. Don’t use a nickname unless you know the person prefers a shortened name. Use “Jonathan” instead of “John” unless you know that is his preferred name.
- **Maintain privacy.** Use the “Bcc” option on email if you’re sending a message to a large group of people and you need to protect the privacy of your list. Additionally, avoid giving out e-mail addresses to a third party (such as an Evite, newsletter, etc).
- **Avoid slang or shortcuts to real words.** Don’t use shortcuts such as "4 u" (instead of "for you") or "Gr8" (for great) in a business e-mail. Avoid smiley faces or emoticons as well.
- **Keep exclamation points to a minimum.** The absolute maximum number of exclamation points in a single email is one. Otherwise, it looks immature.
- **Be cautious with humor.** Humor can easily get lost in translation without the right tone or facial expressions. Something that you think is funny might not be funny to someone else. When in doubt, leave it out.
- **Don't "e-mail angry".** Expressing anger, reprimanding a colleague, or making fun of other people in e-mails (especially about your boss) are all major mistakes. Because e-mail can seem so informal, many people fall into this trap. Always remember that e-mail correspondence lasts forever and can be forwarded to anybody.
- **Respond in a timely fashion to email.** Responding within 24-48 hours is generally acceptable.
- **Think twice before hitting ‘reply all’ on email.** Do not hit "reply all" unless every member on the e-mail chain needs to know.
- **Pick up the phone or speak in person.** It is often easier to speak with someone in person or by phone when a topic has a lot that requires explanation, will generate many questions, or cause confusion. Avoid using e-mail for last minute cancellations of meetings, lunches, and interviews. If you need to deliver bad news, be sure to do so in person or on the phone, never via email.
Projecting self-confidence and self-sufficiency

An internship is the perfect time and place to practice your skills and apply what you have learned in your classes. Remember that asking questions demonstrates a willingness to learn. Helpful Hints:

- Attempt everything to the best of your ability.
- Focus on what you do know and how much you are improving each day, rather than focusing on what you don’t know.
- Learn what you can from others by watching and carefully listening—then ask questions if there is something you don’t understand.
- Attend as many events as possible to interact with your customers/clients.
- Request feedback and be prepared to take on constructive criticism without being defensive.
- Be open-minded and flexible about new opportunities or projects.
- Reflect on your mistakes and consider how you can improve moving forward.

Taking initiative

When experiencing a challenging situation at your internship, figure out how you can make it better. What can you do when you have ‘nothing’ to do? Remember that future employers want to hear about examples of when you have taken initiative! Helpful Hints:

- Set clear learning objectives for your internship and go back to these on a regular basis to ensure that you are meeting these goals. Feel free to revise these objectives in consultation with your supervisor.
- Make suggestions to your supervisor or think through some possible solutions.
- Take ownership of projects.
- Challenge yourself to think creatively by drawing inspiration from a variety of sources, including what you have learned in the classroom. Seek support from your “network”, which includes friends, family, professors and classmates.

Staying organized

Make a plan of action for every task to ensure that you work ahead of time in order to meet deadlines. Don’t procrastinate and wait until the last minute. You will feel rushed and deliver sloppy work. Helpful Hints:

- Create an action plan for each project by breaking down big tasks into smaller tasks.
- Ask your internship supervisor if the organization uses a specific organization tool that may also be helpful for you.
- Schedule regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss your performance.
- Alert your supervisor if you encounter a problem you are unable to solve.
- If you feel overwhelmed, discuss with your supervisor how you might prioritize your tasks or ask for additional resources. Think through some possible solutions.
- Keep track of your internship hours. They will need to be documented on your internship timesheet and verified by your supervisor in order to receive credit for the internship course.
Building a professional network

It’s not always what you know, it’s who you know. Build relationships with others at your internship site to expand your professional network. Helpful Hints:

- Introduce yourself to as many people as possible.
- Connect with your contacts on LinkedIn.
- Keep your skills and accomplishments up to date on your resume and LinkedIn profiles. You never know when someone will request a copy.
- Conduct informational interviews when possible with contacts you develop and try to understand how they got to where they are in their career.
- Keep it professional. Avoid gossiping with colleagues and office romance.

Reporting problems

If you are having problems (of any nature) with your supervisor or other employees, inform the instructor immediately. Under Title IX, all reports of sexual harassment or assault must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator. For more information, please visit www.albany.edu/titleIX.

Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct for Student Interns

As an intern, you represent not just yourself, but the university and your classmates. During the UUNI 288 or 289 internship, you understand that you are responsible for:

1. Behaving professionally at all times.
2. Following the internship site’s employment policies, practices, dress code, and standards of conduct. This includes, but is not limited to:
   a. Maintaining confidentiality regarding information accessed on patients, clients, customers, employees, products or services associated with the internship site.
   b. Using professional language and behavior in all forms of communication.
   c. Being prepared, punctual, and reliable.
   d. Dressing appropriately and remembering that it is often better to be over-dressed than under-dressed.
   e. Participating in orientation, testing, or other requirements of the internship site.
   f. Engaging in ethical and legal behavior.
   g. Taking responsibility for your actions and behavior at the internship site.
   h. Respecting and representing yourself positively as a student and a member of the University at Albany community.
3. Keeping the course instructor apprised of any changes to your or your internship supervisor’s contact information, including email address, address, and telephone number.
4. Meeting with your supervisor on a regular basis to discuss the values, codes of conduct, regulations, and assignments at the internship site.

5. Notifying your site supervisor immediately about absences, illness, or other serious circumstances. You may not withdraw from the site except in serious circumstances made in agreement with the course instructor and internship supervisor.

6. Notifying any changes in internship status (such as termination, cut in hours, or continuation of internship for the following semester) to the course instructor.

7. Keeping track of internship hours and completing all assignments related to the internship course.